

Amendments to the Drawings:

The drawing sheet attached in connection with the above-identified application containing Figure 10 is being presented as a new formal drawing sheet to be substituted for the previously submitted drawing sheet. Figure 10 has been amended. Appended to this amendment is an annotated copy of the previous drawing sheet which has been marked to show the changes presented in the replacement sheet.

The specific changes which have been made to Figure 10 are the addition of reference numerals 1000, 1005, 1010, 1015, 1020, 1025, 1030, 1035, 1040, and 1045 and their respective leader lines.

REMARKS

Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration of the present application in view of the foregoing amendments and in view of the reasons that follow. After amending the claims as set forth above, claims 1-27 remain pending in this application.

Applicant wishes to thank the Examiner for the careful consideration given to the claims.

Drawings

Figure 10 has been amended to put back the reference numerals that were inadvertently omitted when the formal drawings were submitted on July 14, 2004.

Rejection of claims 1-27 based on Nishiga

Claims 1-27 have been rejected in view of U.S. Patent Application Publication 2005/0003844 ("Nishiga"), either alone or in combination with U.S. Patent Application Publication 2003/0186675 ("Davis"). These rejections are traversed for at least the following reasons.

Applicants submit herewith the Rule 131 Declarations of Mr. Masato Kimura, Director of Engineering Administration and Corporate Planning at Nissan Technical Center North America, Inc. (Exhibit 1) and of Mr. Glenn Law (as Exhibit 2), one of the attorneys who assisted in the preparation of the present application. As discussed in the Declarations, the present inventors conceived the present invention prior to the January 30, 2004 filing date of Nishiga. Furthermore, Applicants' attorneys and the inventors were diligent in preparing the present application from the date just prior to January 30, 2004, to the March 31, 2004 filing date of the present application.

Applicants submit that the Rule 131 Declarations are sufficient to remove Nishiga as prior art because the present inventors conceived the present invention prior to the filing date of Nishiga and the present inventors and their attorneys were diligent in constructively reducing the present application to practice from the Nishiga filing date to the filing date of the present application. Applicants respectfully request that all §102(e) and § 103(a) rejections based on Nishiga be withdrawn.

For at least these reasons, allowance of the claims is respectfully requested.

Conclusion

Applicant believes that the present application is now in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration of the application as amended is respectfully requested.

The Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned by telephone if it is felt that a telephone interview would advance the prosecution of the present application.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any additional fees which may be required regarding this application under 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.16-1.17, or credit any overpayment, to Deposit Account No. 19-0741. Should no proper payment be enclosed herewith, as by a check or credit card payment form being in the wrong amount, unsigned, post-dated, otherwise improper or informal or even entirely missing, the Commissioner is authorized to charge the unpaid amount to Deposit Account No. 19-0741. If any extensions of time are needed for timely acceptance of papers submitted herewith, Applicant hereby petitions for such extension under 37 C.F.R. §1.136 and authorizes payment of any such extensions fees to Deposit Account No. 19-0741.

Respectfully submitted,

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